

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-09

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FOR LOS DELEGATION, ATTN: WINSTON

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PLOS, ET
SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN POSITIONS ON THE LOS CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 213683

SUMMARY. THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY TWO ITEMS ON THE LOS CONFERENCE
IN THE ETHIOPIAN MEDIA, ALL OF WHICH ARE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED.
THIS IS INDICATIVE OF THE VERY LOW LEVEL OF INTEREST IN THE
SUBJECT BY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. FOREIGN MINISTRY LOS
ACTION OFFICER HAS NO INFORMATION TO SHARE ON ETHIOPIAN POS-
ITIONS IN LOS CONFERENCE. IT IS LIKELY THAT ETHIOPIAN LOS
DEL IS OPERATING UNDER GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO ALIGN ETHIO-
PIAN POSITIONS WITH G-77 AND USSR/CUBA TO THE GREATEST EX-
TENT POSSIBLE AND WHERE THEY COINCIDE PARTICULARLY REGARDING
EXPLORATION OF SEABED RESOURCES. END SUMMARY.

2. ONLY LOCAL MEDIA COMMENT TO DATE ON RESUMED SEVENTH SES-
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SION OF THE UN LOS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN TWO ARTICLES IN GOV-
ERNMENT-OWNED, ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY, "ETHIOPIAN HERALD".
BOTH WERE DATED NEW YORK, ONE ATTRIBUTED TO "AGENCIES"
AND OTHER TO TASS. "AGENCIES" ARTICLE, DATED 31 AUGUST,
QUOTED GROUP CHAIRMAN SAYA NANDA OF FIJI'S CONCERN OVER
PLANS BY US AND OTHER "IMPERIALIST NATIONS" TO ENACT UNI-
LATERAL LEGISLATION TO EXPLOIT SEABED RESOURCES PRIOR TO AN

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT. NANDA NOTED THAT THE GROUP OF 77 COUNTRIES COULD RETALIATE AGAINST SUCH ACTIONS BY REFUSING TO ALLOW SHIPPING TO USE STRAITS OR TO SAIL BETWEEN ISLANDS. SECOND ARTICLE, DATED 1 SEPT FROM TASS NOTED INTENTION OF WESTERN NATIONS, US IN PARTICULAR, TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY IN SEABED RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT. THE ARTICLE NOTED THAT THE SOVIET UNION SUPPORTED THE G-77 POSITION AND QUOTED USSR DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SEMYON KOZYREV TO EFFECT THAT A UNILATERAL ACT TOWARD SEABED DEVELOPMENT CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION OF THE UNGA RESOLUTION. ARTICLES SUCH AS THESE ARE DAILY FARE IN ETHIOPIAN MEDIA, WHICH CARRY ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ANTI-WESTERN ITEMS. WE SEE NO SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THESE ARTICLES. FACT THAT ETHIOPIAN MEDIA HAVE MADE ONLY TWO LOW-LEVEL MENTIONS OF LOS CONFERENCE IS, HOWEVER, ILLUSTRATIVE OF LOW DEGREE OF ETHIOPIAN INTEREST IN THE CONFERENCE.

2. LOS MATTERS ARE ALSO GIVEN VERY LOW PRIORITY BY FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S LOS BACKSTOPPER IS A LOW LEVEL BUREAUCRAT WHO IS CONCERNED WITH LOS ONLY IN PASSING (MOFA LEGAL AFFAIRS - FISSEHA YIMER). WE HAVE REPEATEDLY TRIED TO GET SOME INDICATION OF ETHIOPIA'S POSITION ON LOS QUESTIONS AND HAVE IN EVERY CASE BEEN REFERRED TO THE US LOS DELEGATION WITH COMMENT THAT ETHIOPIAN LOS DELEGATION SHOULD HAVE MADE THE ETHIOPIAN POSITION CLEAR TO OTHER LOS DELEGATIONS. WE SUSPECT THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY LOS ACTION OFFICER DOES NOT KNOW THE LOS ISSUES UNDER DISCUSSION IN NEW YORK. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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3. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE ETHIOPIAN LOS DEL IN NEW YORK IS OPERATING ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS WITHOUT REFERRING SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO THEIR FOREIGN MINISTRY. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE ETHIOPIAN LOS DEL HAS BEEN TOLD TO ALIGN ITS POSITIONS WITH THOSE OF THE G-77 AND TO REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS ONLY IN CASES IN WHICH THE G-77 AND THE USSR/CUBA MIGHT DIFFER. ISSUES ON WHICH ETHIOPIA MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO HAVE A NATIONAL POSITION, BASED ON ITS GEOGRAPHY, INCLUDE: STRAITS (BAB EL MANDEB), THE ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF THE RED SEA FOR BOTH FISH AND MINERAL RESOURCES, THE USE OF ISLANDS (DAHLAC ARCHIPELAGO) IN ESTABLISHING EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONES AND HOW TO OBTAIN SOME FINANCIAL BENEFIT FROM THE ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF DEEP SEA BEDS BY THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. CHAPIN

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